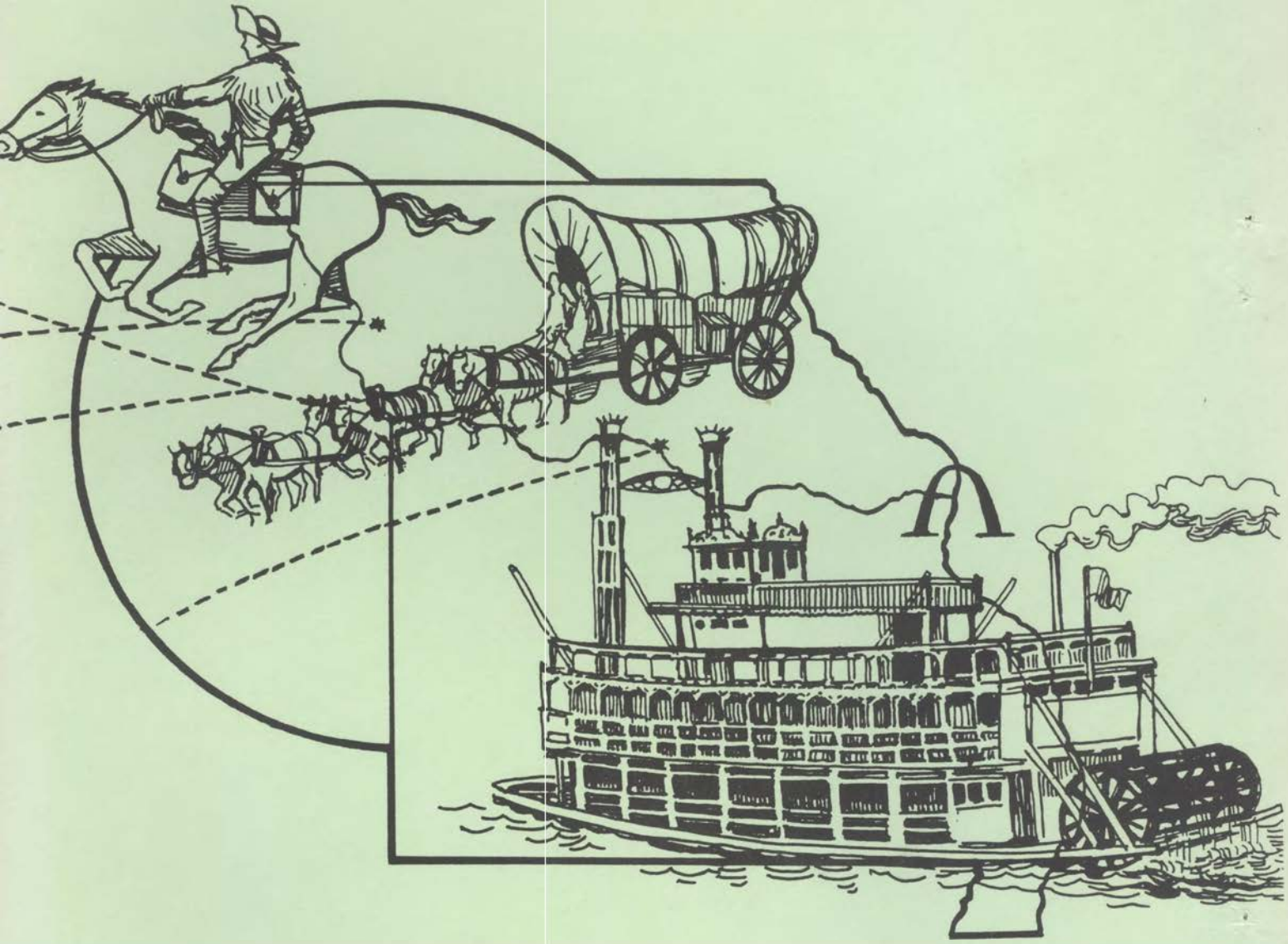
Spring, 1988



# TOWARD THE SETTING SUN

The Historical Journal

of

The United Methodist Church

The Missouri Area

Volume VI, Number 2 Spring, 1988

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From the Editor:

Anno Domine 1988 is an important year in the life of our church. Twenty years ago, in Dallas, The United Methodist Church came into being. In May, we will commemorate the 250th anniversary of John Wesley's heart-warming experience at Aldersgate, an event which led to the evangelical revival in England and, ultimately, to our existence today.

In spite of the differences that mark the various branches of the Wesleyan movement, we are all united in our debt to that one little man whose burning faith shaped the history of the western world. We are united in commitment to theological doctrines such as prevenient grace, justification by faith, the assurance of the Holy Spirit, "going on to perfection". We are united in our commitment to "reform the continent and spread scriptural holiness over the land". We are united in itineracy, episcopacy, and the connectional system, even though we do not always agree on how those systems should work in practice.

Another historic General Conference will be held in Missouri this year. Kansas City hosted the great Uniting Conference of 1939 which brought together into The Methodist Church the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. St. Louis hosted the special session of the General Conference in 1970 which finished up the work of the Uniting Conference of 1968

witnessed the appeal of black United Methodists for equality within the church of their forefathers and foremothers. This year the General Conference returns to St. Louis. Your Missouri Historical Society will be represented there. The Daily Christian Advocate will carry, in its first issue, a brief article on Methodism in Missouri, written by the editor of Toward the Setting Sun.

This issue of Toward the Setting Sun marks another important date for Missouri Methodists. We have now completed six years of publication. When we began, back in 1982, none of us were sure the journal would outlive the Bicentennial which gave it birth. We are moving forward. The Index of articles which have appeared in the journal reminds us of how far we've come.

This issue is also a reminder that your membership dues are payable by the sessions of the Annual Conferences. Both sessions of the annual conferences will have persons available to help you renew your membership, or you may use the form in this issue of the journal and mail it directly to

Maurine Whitworth
5528 Tennessee
St. Louis, Mo. 63111

Why not also order a gift subscription for a friend, for your pastor, or for the church library?

The writers for this issue of Toward the Setting Sun come from a wide variety of backgrounds. You remember that we have

deliberately chosen to refer to Methodism in these pages, rather than United Methodism. That decision was made by the Bicentennial Committee in 1982, with the hope that we would become a voice for all branches of the Wesleyan movement in Missouri. This issue is an example of that hope come to life. The Rev. Cyrus S. Keller, Jr. is a Presiding Elder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, with an office in St. Louis. Rev. Keller also carries responsibility for editing youth curriculum resources for his denomination. It was while he was wearing that hat that I had a delightful time with him when we both attended a Consultation on the Church's Ministry with Black Youth in Nashville last November. Within a few days of that consultation, he brought the address to the annual meeting of the Missouri Methodist Historical Society. Rev. Keller's address is carried in this issue.

Marian Heltibrand is a graduate of Central Methodist College, a member of the English department at Lindbergh High School in St. Louis, and a member of Webster Hills United Methodist Church. One of her life-long avocations has been the stories that can be found in cemeteries and she has shared part of that avocation with us in these pages. She is also preparing an article on one of the benefactors of Central Methodist College for a future issue.

Thos. Johnson (1802-1865) was a native of Virginia, who joined the Missouri Conference in 1826. After 1830, he served

for eleven years on Indian missions in Kansas, which at that time was not a part of the United States. From 1847-1862 he was head of the Indian Manual Labor School in the Indian Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. During the war, he strongly supported the Union and was killed by a band of guerrillas at his home near Westport, Mo., in 1865 Johnson County, Kansas, is named in his honor. We have printed some of his letters in this issue, as a reminder both of the work of Missouri conferences in spreading the Gospel and of the numbers of important primary documents in our history that are out there, just waiting to be used. Those of you who might like to try your hand at writing for Toward the Setting Sun could begin with a biographical article on Thomas Johnson. We would be happy to suggest sources and give you help with your article.

Remember that the editorial offices of the journal have moved to "Mecca". Your editor now lives in Nashville, Tennessee but his heart is in Missouri. Address your ideas for articles, your manuscripts, your comments and concerns to:

Dr. John Gooch
5061 English Village Drive
Nashville, TN, 37211

# THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Cyrus S. Keller, Jr.

I'm appreciative of the invitation to share with you and of the assignment. Bishop Anderson asked me to do it for him and, unlike you Methodists, we don't make a habit of telling bishops no. I don't often get to speak for a bishop. They usually speak for you or to you. So, I said yes and when the letter came, I said that sounds like it might be fun, since I'm a bit of history buff.

It's interesting to come and share with you something about our church. I'm sure you know that in 1784 at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore when we began this which we call the Methodist Church in America there were at least two persons of color in that convention, in that meeting. One was a man named Absalom Jones and the other a man named Richard Allen. Interesting persons because one of was born on the 13th of Feb. (Absalom Jones) and the other was born on the 14th of February about 14 years apart and by machinations known only to the Lord, they were there, having heard the good news of God's grace through Jesus Christ. Richard Allen is the man who concerns me the most because he is like the founding father, the generative spirit, the motivating force. Both of them were converted into faith in Jesus Christ under the Methodist tradition.

Richard Allen was a slave. He was born on a plantation owned by a man named Benjamin Shue. He was sold to a man we believe whose name was Stokely. We found out just this year that was not all of his name, there was more to it than that but in those days one name was enough because it was all the name we had. During the experience in the home of Mr. Stokely, Richard Allen began to preach. Freeborn Garrettson was brought in to be the preacher and converted the owner and the owner permitted Richard Allen to purchase his freedom. Strange arrangement, but it seemed the pattern was in those days that slaves could work after working for their master and they could make money and those who made money were permitted to keep some of it and give some of it to the master. And so for the sum of $2000 in Continental money Richard Allen was able to purchase his own and his brother's freedom.

Allen moved to Philadelphia about the same time that Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson were running around in the house of Benjamin Rush talking about let's get rid of the English. Something strange happened. Richard Allen was about 16 years of age in 1776. He was active in St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. He took the hymnbook and taught himself to read by comparing words in the hymnbook and to read the Bible and finally was made a deacon by the hands of Francis Asbury.

Allen and Absalom Jones and other free persons of color began to gather at St. George's Church. Sometimes they were

compelled by the trustees to preach at four o'clock in the morning. But folk came. Sometimes at 6 o'clock in the evening and folk came, and there were about 47 regularly attending people of color who came to that church.. It was in November somewhere between the 18th and 22nd that on a Sunday as they came to worship one of the trustees said to them as they knelt where they had been normally accustomed to kneel to pray---- or to take communion, that's kind of lost---"you can't pray here. You have to go to the balcony." Absalom Jones said, "let us finish the prayer and we'll trouble you no more."

And so, when they finished the prayer they went out from St. George's Church and went to a piece of land that Richard Allen owned and began to hold meetings there. Strange commentary---the people at St. George's Church didn't want them in, but didn't want them out either. So they assigned an elder to go down and take care of this little mission. But he was more interested in getting his $100 a year, which was his salary, than he was in ministering. And just like Methodists are everyplace I'm ever been, when the preacher doesn't show up when they need him they have a way of complaining to the bishop that he isn't doing his job. Well, they complained but the bishop wasn't empathetic at all to their complaint. The people at St. George's weren't happy. So they decided we don't need you...we'll stay away and you stay away. Richard Allen was a deacon and so he began preaching in this converted blacksmith

shop that he put on this piece of land at Sixth and Pine and Lombard, six blocks from Independence Square in the city of Philadelphia.

It's interesting that Richard Allen and Absalom Jones had this cadre of people about them who were free people and the decision was made where do we go? What church do we go into? Well, they had a vote. The majority of the people wanted to be Episcopalians and so in 1789 the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas was organized and Absalom Jones was later ordained the first black priest in America. And so the Episcopal Church takes all its ministry to people of color from Absalom Jones.

The other folks, Richard said, really weren't ready for high church, all the kinds of things Episcopalians do, and he said the kind of freedom, the looseness--- and I don't mean that word in any sense except the lack of rigidity--- of the Methodist tradition was better for freed people of color, and so he retained the relationship with Francis Asbury and the Methodist Conference and we became part of the Methodist tradition. And without fear of too many recriminations and contradictions, I think we're about the only Methodist body that hasn't messed with any of it. We're still like we were. We wear different clothes, of course, but we haven't changed the Articles of Religion, we haven't changed the episcopacy, we haven't changed the orders to make preachers, we haven't changed many of the things that you folks have struggled with

through the days of your history.

Among the things that Richard Allen did that were interesting was the creation of the Free African Society. That was interesting because the Free African Society was designed to help freed slaves take care of themselves. And he also started a benevolent society to write insurance. I read the other day that the first insurance program was this thing that Richard Allen started, where people paid money in, got a little help when they needed it. And I suppose the efforts of the Red Cross can be traced to the efforts of the Free African Society, because in the yellow fever epidemic in the city of Philadelphia, it was these folk who went out and met the emergent needs. It was the members of the Free African Society who went out and cared for and buried the dead who had died in that awful epidemic. And some of you remember seeing the television special on George Washington. He was outside of his house in Philadelphia when he was made president and ran into this man of color named Richard Allen and they talked about the Free African Society and when Washington set his slaves free, they were recommended to membership in this group.

Richard Allen was an interesting man. He was full of fire and vigor, he was full of awareness of what God could do, and somehow or other when he believed the gospel, he felt a different kind of person and so he began to move among his people with the idea that even though they were chattels and

enslaved they were still objects of God's love and should live like that.

In the city of Baltimore, out of the Lovely Lane Church, came another group of people of color, led by Daniel Coker, a man of light skin, a man who also had been ordained by Francis Asbury to the ministry and they formed a church which we know as Bethel in Baltimore. It still stands on Druid Hill. It was one of the 13 churches that gathered in Philadelphia in 1816 to create our first General Conference. Congregations came not only from Baltimore, but also from Wilmington, Delaware; Attleboro, Pennsylvania; Salem, New Jersey; and there were about 16 people representing 16 congregations that came together to determine what they should do for themselves, because they had the same history of being maltreated within the body of Methodism as it was then constituted. We Christians have some interesting things about us. We love the Lord and we love each other, as long as they're not too close. We love the Lord and we love to talk about his grace, and sometimes we become uncomfortable when we have to do something about it.

As a result of this meeting in Philadelphia, we formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church in April 1816. And we had six annual conferences by 1820. They were the Baltimore Conference, the Philadelphia Conference, the New York Conference, the Ohio Conference, the Indiana conference, and the Canada Conference. I am interested and thrilled by the idea of

the Indiana Conference, because the Indiana Conference is the strangest conference. Your treasurer mentioned this preacher, I assume a bishop, who had Louisiana, Georgia, and some other states. The Indiana Conference for us, at the time of which I speak, about 100 years or so ago, cared for everything west of the Mississippi. Whoever was bishop in that conference had all of that vastness. That hasn't changed all that much, because the bishop whom I serve, the Bishop of the Fifth District, has 17 states west of the Mississippi. You understand that our demographic figures are not that great, there are not that many people of color any more in the places where the mines have gone and that kind of work is not being done.

The Indiana Conference is significant because out of the Indiana COnference came a man whose name is William Paul Quinn. I know he was born in India. How would an Indian, born somewhere in India, get to America?. How would he find himself at home in the African Methodist Episcopal Church? He had words with the bishop and left for a while, but then he saw the light and came back again. Then he came to Missouri. The anecdotal thing about him is that he stood on the banks of the Mississippi in Illinois, around about Alton, and preached across the river to slaves in Missouri. . Next May, Lord willing, as we bring our Bicentennial celebration to a close, we may seek to replicate that, but we haven't anyone with that kind of voice anymore! Apparently the channel was not quite as wide as it is now. But the story is that William Paul Quinn

came to Illinois and he heard that there were slaves over here and he began to preach the good news. Our St. Paul's church in St. Louis is the result of that preaching. A lady rowed her boat across and brought him over at night and he surreptitiously met with black people and began to preach the good news. All up and down the Mississippi River on the Missouri side, we find the trail of this man, who must have been a man of stature. One of the wanted posters put out by the authorities went something like this: "Wanted---a big black nigger on a white horse, preaching" That's the way they described him. And he must have been a man of size.

All the work west of the Mississippi River as far as Kansas was done by this man who came from India by some direction of the holy Spirit into the United States, into our church, the Indiana Conference.

Another interesting thing that comes out of the Indiana Conference. There was an elder, the Rev. T.M.D. Ward, who left Indianapolis, Indiana, got on a boat, went down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, got another boat, went all the way down around the Horn, and came up to San Francisco. In San Francisco, he got another boat to go up the Sacramento River to go to a place called Oroville, the City of Gold, where there were numbers of people of color working in the gold fields. This was about 1848-49. He was compelled to stop for some reason. I believe it was the work of the Holy Spirit. He was

compelled to stop at the city of Sacramento City. In the city of Sacramento, there was a little group of 13 people who had come because their owners had brought them to California, who had come to work in the houses, to work as servants, 13 people were meeting together in the home of a man named Blue and they were praying the Lord God to send them a preacher to start a church. These persons organized the first Methodist church for people of color, and that's the way it was called, in the home of Mr. Blue. I've only seen one picture of him, because I snatched it from one of his children before history forgot him, and put it in the church I served. It's always intrigued me how this man would come all the way around the Horn, intending to go to Oroville, and then get off in Sacramento. Maybe it's because there were people praying like Lydia prayed in the days of St. Paul. That's our mother church, all because of the Indiana Conference. So now our work went from St. Louis to California and we began to close in in between.

Out in the place called Nicodemus, Kansas, there is a little church, also a part of the work of William Paul Quinn. Nicodemus was almost completely a black community, in the days when the wheat harvest was blowing in the wind, the trains were running. Nicodemus, Hill City, Bold, Kansas, were all communities that came out of the ministry of our church. We sent preachers out there. We sent people to minister to slaves who had come from Tennessee, from Alabama, some who had been brought by Indians as they left on the Trail of Tears and we

began a ministry there. That's a little bit about how we spread about.

In addition to that, we got in trouble. It follows when you get a bunch of people who think they are made in God's image, when they believe that God loves them and sent His Son to give his life for them, and they've been able to put together something of their own kind, it's kind of difficult to tell those people they aren't quite who they think they are.

There was a fellow named Morris Brown, who was a second bishop of our church and he went to a place called South Carolina. He made the mistake of preaching about God's love and how all God's children were created in God's image. While he was preaching that way, a fellow named Denmark Vesey, a freed man, who had been reared by a Norwegian sea captain, became a steward in that church in Charleston, South Carolina. At that time in Charleston, there were more freed persons of color than there were white folk. The freedom spirit that comes because of faith moved in that congregation and you know the story. There was a Denmark Vesey insurrection. It would have worked, except there's always somebody who's got to talk. You can never have a secret in church---there's always somebody who has to talk about it. When the decision had been made to make the stand of these free persons at Immanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and when the white folk found out where the guns were and where the battle was to be, the strategists said let's meet them right there. When the insurrectionists came down

High Street and turned the corner, instead of finding themselves able to get their own guns, their own powder, they found themselves facing the guns of the owners of the slaves. As a result of that insurrection, the South Carolina legislature made all of our clergy and all of our churches outlaw. Our clergy were to be jailed if they were found in the community, our churches were not allowed to be open.

And, even in the midst of that kind of restriction, God had a plan. Across the street from Immanuel Church, where it still stands, upstairs in a room above a little shop, was a little teeny fellow named Daniel Alexander Payne. He had been teaching the children of slaves how to read and write, which was against the law. When they found out that Daniel Alexander Payne had this school up there, for the children of blacks, they came after him. The Lord always has ways of delivering his people. Angels came and got Peter out of jail. Angels come in many ways, some with wings and some without wings. A lady came, a lady who was fair of skin, who would never be challenged, came to Daniel and said "put these clothes on". So he dressed as her maid, she put him in her buggy, got him on a ship and got him up north. He landed in Philadelphia, went into a Lutheran seminary, trained to be a Lutheran preacher, met Richard Allen and met our church, and decided, "this is where I'd rather be". Finally, in 1863, he wandered into Ohio and ran into some Methodists who had a school in a place called

Xenia, just outside of Dayton. They said, "we have a school, we don't really know what to do with it. He said, "I'll buy it". So he bought the school. I've seen the document that the trustees signed to create that school. It is an interesting combination of Xs, Os, and marks, because very few of the 80 people who signed the document to start Wilberforce University could themselves read or write. The school was begun in the midst of some protest. It was set afire by people in the community who did not think there should be a place for people of color to learn to read and write. That was our first effort at educating our people.

It was Daniel Alexander Payne who coined our motto, which says, "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother". That has been basically our philosophy ever since. We today now have seven schools. We have Wilberforce, a fully accredited school, Edward Watters College in Florida, a fully accredited school, we have Morris Brown in Georgia, Allen University in South Carolina, Paul Quinn in Texas, and Shorter College in Arkansas. We have seminaries attached to Wilberforce, Edward Watters, Paul Quinn, and we're part of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

Before I leave that, it might interst you to know that, within forty years after our founding, our church was having about forty-five different efforts in educating our people. Some of them were in cornfields, some were in back rooms, some were legitimate and some were illegitimate schools. Forty

years after we had begun our life as a church we were busy training black men and women to serve each other and to be effective witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I think I might just say another word about what happened in that process. Out of that kind of torment has come some things you know and that we are very proud of. One of the things you know that happened as a result of our existence is the NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It was in one of our churches that Mrs. Overton had her meeting in 1909 over there in Springfield to create what was later called the Niagara movement. W.E.B. DuBois, who has been cited as perhaps the father of one of the liberation movements that are common to people of color, is a product of our church. Not his philosophy. We got him started, and sent him on to Harvard, where he learned some things, maybe didn't learn enough, I say that because of his preference for another system than the Christian Church.

Henry McNeill Turner, a man who came out of Georgia, was the first chaplain to be assigned military responsibility for troops in the United States Government. We've spawned people like Hiram Revels, the first Senator of color, we spawned the first Treasurer of the United States among people of color, a bishop of our church, Bishop Vernon. We're not so pleased with the first things so much as we're pleased to see our people given the opportunity to grow and to make themselves persons of worth and make themselves useful in our community.

I think I ought to say a word about what's happened to us since that time. Our church left the limits of the United States back in 1827. Eleven years after we started we sent a missionary to Haiti. His name was Scipio Beam. Before that, in 1816, when we had the first General Conference, Daniel Coker was elected first bishop of our church but he felt he was too light of skin, too close to the dominant persons in the community to serve this church and lead it, so he resigned his election and led a group of people back to Sierra Leone, in Africa. He began our church there.

I mentioned Henry McNeill Turner. He was petitioned by members of the British Methodist Church in South Africa to come and receive them as members of our church. He went there in about 1887 or 1888 and received into our church members of the British Methodist Church in South Africa. We've been there ever since. As a matter of fact, we have a current membership of almost 200,000 persons in South Africa, to say nothing of Namibia, Lesotho, Tanzania, Zaire. Central Africa is a strong center for us. We're beginning some work in Nigeria, We're strong in Liberia, in what used to be the Gold Coast and West Africa. We're hoping to do some more work in Mozambique, the war has hindered our work there.

We've been giving the South African government fits, because in our church we can't segregate people. There is no way in the world for us to have a church and segregate people

on the basis of skin color. How can you do that? I guess you could if you were stupid, but if you're a Christian you can't. We have a friend, Lionel Low, who is teaching in Cape Town, in South Africa. He is by definition a colored person, and so is his wife. The church that Lionel serves is basically a church of African people, Zulu and Chausa. According to law, he's not supposed to be able to meet with them, because colored people and native people are not supposed to be able to meet. They do it anyhow. Bishop Anderson, who is our ecumenical officer, was made an honorary white person in South Africa, to permit him to live in certain places. He could not go into hotels to eat or sleep or to travel on public transportation without that designation. Our church just takes that in stride until they decide to do something about it with us. They tell our church you can't baptize children, because the last time you were here you prayed the wrong kind of prayer. There is in our Discipline, as there is in yours, a prayer for the President of the United States asking for wisdom. We don't think anything about that. But over there, that's seditious if it's prayed by one of us. And there is always somebody in your worship service to see that you worship God in their way and not in yours. If we say the wrong thing, that pastor is put out. But we're there.

We can't bring any money out or send money in, so it's a self-supporting church. But the church is growing. We have a school there, called the R. R. Wright Institute, sort of a

seminary and liberal arts college, and we're training all kinds of people in that church school. The animists come to learn theology---can you imagine! The people who don't really believe in Jesus, who have some kind of religion of their own, they come to our school, and hopefully that's a missionary outlet as we train them, and the only thing we can train them in is the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion we share together. Hopefully that will make a difference.

Today there are 2,000,000 of us around the world. We have work in all kinds of interesting places with strange names and strange locations. Go to London and the persons who have come from the West Indies are there. Go to British Guyana and we have churches there. We have thriving work in Surinam and Trinidad and the Virgin Islands. Unfortunately, I have never been able to convince anyone we should have mission work in Hawaii. I have volunteered myself for that call, but no one, not even my own bishop, has seen fit to begin that work and send me there. We do have work in Alaska, in Grenada, all over the Caribbean, Bermuda. We haven't gone too far into Latin America. We're going to have to look at that field, because increasingly where we live and minister, people of Spanish language and names are coming in. We're praying that our church will have vision to get some bi-lingual pastors who will serve those people and we wont do as so many churches do and run from people who are different.

## TOUCHING THE PAST: DETECTING IN A CHURCHYARD CEMETERY

Marian Heltibrand

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"
Thomas Gray

Written more than two centuries ago, these lines by the English poet Thomas Gray capture the peace, solitude, and nostalgic sense of the past so characteristic of the small cemetery once found adjoining nearly every parish church. Burial for our ancestors, if not in a family plot located on the homestead, was nearly always in the churchyard cemetery, comfortingly close to the sanctuary where they had worshipped. Today most of these early church cemeteries are no longer in active use but remain as memorials to those who have gone before, occasionally visited by descendants tracing the family genealogy, relatives, or those who, like Gray, find satisfaction and subject for reflection in pondering the lives of those who "along the cool, sequestered vale of life...kept the noiseless tenor of their way." Yet these small cemeteries are more than tangible reminders of human mortality and more than a passing glimpse into times gone by. For those willing to search out their secrets, they provide insight and information into the church, congregation, and community which they served.

Bethel Cemetery, associated with Bethel United Methodist Church in Pond, Missouri, was established with the church there in 1873. It has served for more than a century, providing a record of Bethel's history as well as still active service to the community today. Regulated by a Board of Directors, the cemetery maintains the highest standards for both the private "churchyard" portion and the public, nonendowed, portion where lots are available to the general public.

Because an old cemetery such as Bethel can often be a source of both valuable historical data and fascinating personal trivia, we decided to visit the site for research purposes. Since it seemed impossible to separate the history of the cemetery from the history of Bethel Church, we called Dorothy Pendleton, secretary of the church. She provided a great deal of background information, along with a copy of Dr. John Gooch's history of the church, which proved to be invaluable. Our plan involved a visit to Bethel, twice postponed due to unseasonably cold winter temperatures, to explore and record our findings.

Planning steps also included the writing of a brief over view of the church's history which would include material pertinent to the cemetery. We hoped this would also familiarize us with names of the early settlers and members of the congregation, which would give us a starting point for our research. We planned to record our impressions on tape and to do some grave rubbings and photography as well as some sketches. We

prepared an outline of what we hoped to find. The outline was revised many times along the way! In fact, the project broadened in scope as we became more and more deeply involved with Bethel's past.

Bethel Church was born in 1858 at a camp meeting in Camp Hollow, located in west St. Louis County near Hardt and Wild Horse Creek Roads. One year later a stone church, Rock Bethel, was dedicated by the Reverend Dr. Finney, and the tiny congregation---the Tippetts, the Sappingtons, the Lockers, and others ---struggled for existence during the war years. They moved to a log church in 1867 and grew to a twenty-nine member congregation by 1873. Confident in their faith, the same year the members formed a building committee. Two acres of land on Manchester Road were donated by the St. Louis Marble Company, and additional land was purchased for a church cemetery. In God is in this Place...A History of Bethel United Methodist Church, Dr. John Gooch writes, "The first burial was in August of 1873...a Mr. William Atwell, who was killed by striking against the roof of Laclede Bridge the night of August 29". Donated stone was hauled in by teams of horses for the first drive, built laboriously by Raymond Wright, J.W. Fridley, and others. Thus the history of Bethel Cemetery, which was to parallel that of the church, was begun.

The 1873 Building Committee had, of course, no means of foreseeing that more than one hundred years later a large congregation would assemble for weekly services at Bethel and

that the Bethel Cemetery too would b e providing for the needs of the congregation and community. Their concerns were for the present. They had a small membership of Southern Methodists, feeling the tensions of the war years with the Unionist German residents of the area. That tension was still very much a part of the Missouri scene in 1873. Also, the Grant administration and the Panic of 1873 had combined to create five years of unemployment, depression, and economic instability (Gooch, p. 10) But building went on ---a frame structure with a rock-walled basement, stained glass windows, a marble slab above the door, a $40 bell, even a steeple---completed at at cost of $5,342.30. The dedication was held in April, 1875, and a new pastor, Irl R. Hicks, appointed in the fall. Many of those who witnessed and participated in these early years at Bethel rest in its cemetery today, still close in spirit to the church they served so faithfully.

Years of struggle followed. In 1925 the church had only twenty-five members. Over the decades, it continued to grow steadily and to minister steadfastly to the needs of the congre gation and local community. Revival meetings, Sunday School, Ladies Aid Societies, chicken suppers, a new organ, Epworth League all became part of the church's life. Pastors were paid with what the stewards could collect or through the offering, with $350-$400 a year considered a good sum. The Roaring Twenties, the Depression of the Thirties, the Forties and World War II brought growth and change; by the 1950 Diamond Jubilee

the membership stood at 190: by 1960, 311. But growth is more than statistics; it is service, and, as the Friends of Bethel wrote for the 1950 celebration, it is "a typical country church from which thousands have got comfort and strength and guidance". Over the years as the congregation and population of the surrounding area grew, so did the cemetery, creating, in a sense, an historical "document" recording in silent fashion much of life over the past century. Dr. Gooch states that concern over maintenance and funding let to the establishment of a Cemetery Trust Fund, ensuring that maintenance money will always be available even after the sale of all the lots.

Our visit to Bethel Church and Cemetery began with a drive out Manchester Road on a sunny, bitterly cold, January morning. The gently rolling Missouri countryside sparkled beneath a light blanket of snow. Bethel United Methodist Church appeared atop a snow covered hill on the south side of the road, a graceful white frame church with a new brick addition, its steeple sharply outlined against a vivid blue sky streaked with drifting clouds. On this early Saturday morning both church and cemetery were deserted. The bare trees which in summer must soften the landscape with luxuriant greenery seemed now to brace themselves against the freezing temperature. Very few cars passed by on Manchester Road, so the entire scene was one of peaceful wintry solitude where the present had been temporarily left behind, a scene which had in

some respects changed very little since the early days of Bethel's founding in 1875.

Our object was the cemetery, located directly behind the church. We drove slowly down the circular drive to gain an overview of our surroundings. The style and condition of the markers indicated the oldest section to be near the northeast corner, close to the rear of the church, while the western area seemed to be still in use. Nearly all of the markers faced east. Away from the mainstream of time and traffic, it was easy to imagine the scene a century ago when farmhouses, barns, fields, and gardens surrounded Bethel and Sunday morning arrivals, even in frigid weather, came in horse and buggy. St. Louis must have seemed then, as indeed it did now, very far away in the frosty silence of this quiet place, sacred to the memories of those here at rest.

Before we left the warm car to begin our research, we briefly reviewed our expectations for this expedition. What does a visitor to a church cemetery learn about the church itself, the community, and the people who once lived and worshipped in the parish? What can be gleaned from the names and dates, epitaphs, the often crumbling markers fallen into disrepair, of the life events, the joys and sorrows, of the past? Much, of course, must be speculation or conclusions reached through application of basic knowledge and universals of the historical period.

Certain things were, we believed, predictable. Dates on markers record milestones in history as well as lives. We could tell about the development of the nation and its citizens as we read stones of those who were born before the Louisiana Purchase, were children during the days of Jefferson and Jackson, and reached maturity as the shadow of the Civil War stretched across the land. Family names would indicate the national origins of those in the community. Family plots would allow us to speculate on family size, age of marriage and, to some degree, the mobility of those who moved west across the new continent or who stayed to establish roots in the growing midwestern community. We expected to find personal references, fashionable names, references to major historical events, possibly well-known names of local or even national significance, and indications of life span, infant mortality, epidemics, and natural disasters such as fires or floods.

Armed with tapes, outlines, camera, clip boards, and sketching and rubbing equipment, we ventured outside into the cold sunny air and the diamond sparkling snow where granite, stone, and marble markers waited to tell their stories.

As an immediate focus for our attention, an overview of dates in Bethel Cemetery showed us large numbers of persons who had lived through much of the nineteenth century. Birth dates ranged generally from the time of the War of 1812 through the years of westward expansion to the period of the Civil War. Beyond the 1860s, Reconstruction, the golden age of America's

industrial growth, and the dawn of the twentieth century saw birth and death for the people of the little town of Pond, people whose lives must have been touched by the events of those stirring times. Martin Courtney, who died in September, 1852, aged fifty-two, would have been born in 1800, the earliest birth-date we discovered. He was a baby during the administrations of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson and died as the first rumblings of the War between the States were beginning to be heard across the nation. In the newer sections of the cemetery, dates refer to World War I, the Depression, and the Second World War. Emilie Lehmann, 1853-1951, saw in her long lifetime Civil War soldiers with muskets and bayonets followed by Rough Riders, World War I doughboys, and G.I. Joe of World War II and Korea. She must have traveled by horse, Model-T Ford, train, perhaps even jet airliners; worked by candle, gas lamps, and electric lights. She saw the advent of telephone, radio, antibiotics, transatlantic flights, and television. The last of her five children, Fred (1901) and Mary (1903) are alive today with memories that span the current century.

Many dates in the oldest part of Bethel Cemetery were worn away by time and weather, but we did conclude that the area was in the process of active settlement and development from the first third of the nineteenth century onward and that relatively large numbers of residents would have taken part in or been affected by the Civil War years in Missouri.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Who were the residents of the Bethel parish? It was obvious to us after only the most cursory inspection that this was a heavily Germanic local population. We noted such names as Haencken, Knappmeier, Dreinhofer, Ziegenhein, Fahlbush, Lehmann, Gaehle, and Muckenstern on many of the older markers. This indicated to us that Pond was an area favored by first and second generation German immigrants. The Julius Hardt stone (1830-1896) has its inscription entirely in German, and the memorial to Carl and Meta Von Gruben, both born in the 1820s, proudly proclaims Hanover as the city of birth. What a long journey it mast have seemed to Missouri! Berthold and St. Onge reflect French inheritance as Warfield, Baily, Dickens, Miles, and Vespey seem to reflect English. In newer sections, some of the familiar German names are still seen but are less concentrated. It would be reasonable to assume that in and around Pond during the mid- to late- nineteenth century various German dialects would have been commonplace and that German would have been the spoken language in many of the homes.

It was more difficult to determine sociological patterns and family lifestyles than we had anticipated. We found ourselves making most of our assumptions on the basis of our previous knowledge of the time period, rather than from specific data gathered from the markers. Family plots abound, but

family size can only be guessed at, since children may have moved away and been buried elsewhere. In the cemetery's older section there are a number of husband-wife markers with those of two or three children nearby, sometimes children who did not survive infancy. At times it is possible to trace what is, at least apparently, a three generation relationship.

Occasionally a second marriage is apparent. The large Staehill monument (Joseph, do. 1909) and Katie Staehill Hellman, 1877-1965) at first was puzzling. Then we brushed away a light dusting of snow from an adjoining flat marker to find John Hellman (1877-1958), probably a second husband whom the sturdy Katie also outlived. Only a sprinkling of familiar names from an earlier day are repeated on newer markers, so it would be logical to assume that descendants of Bethel's pioneer families have left the area, or that the name has died out locally. (However, Dorothy Pendleton provided me with the names of some of the old families including Atwell, Halley, Poertner, Gaehle, Krueger, Eatherton, Mueller, and Wright whose descendants are at Bethel now.)

Although date of marriage was not noted on the stones, we noted, by comparing parental birth dates and childrens' birth dates, that men and women either did not marry at an early age or begin having children at an early age. This despite the prevailing myths about early marriages in the nineteenth century. For example, if, as we assume, Emilie (b. 1853) and Mathias (b. 1857) Lehmann were the parents of Charles,

Mathilda, George, Fred, and Mary, Emilie had her first child at thirty-nine and her last at fifty!

We found it much easier to trace the changing fashions in first names for both men and women. Perennial choices such as John, Joseph, George, Elizabeth, and Mary appear on markers from the early 1800s to the present. However, less recent stones provide a montage of Victorian and turn-of-the-century favorites which evoke nostalgic memories of a bygone era. Many of these, too, have a distinctly German tone. Rose, Alice, Maude, Sophie, and Emma were obviously popular choices; Lena, Rosa, Freida, Myrtle, and Mable also made numerous appearances. Men's choices were robust: Otto, August, Albert, Julius, Frederick, Herman, and Henry. Early twentieth century selections for little boys indicated a preference for Raymond, Roy, Fred, and Charles; Annie, Agnes, Ruth, and Louisa were popular for girls. Historic associations also appeared; there is not much doubt that Woodrow W. Carter, born October 6, 1914, was the namesake of a president. Probably the most unusual name we saw was Valentine, son of John Baier, certainly a unique choice for a boy born in 1886---or in 1988!

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
With some thrimmed and shapeless sculpt nigh decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

Although the passage of time has certainly rendered some memorials frail, the rhymes are not uncouth nor the sculpture shapeless. The ornate influence of the Victorian period, with its accompanying preoccupation with trim and elaborate design, surfaces in the styles of the older markers, creating a unique landscape in granite and sandstone. Obelisks, columns, urns, pedestals and arches, profusely ornamented with scrolls and drapery mark the resting places of the early Pond settlers. Fascinated, the cold forgotten, we examined the artistic detail so dear to the hearts of those seeking to memorialize family and friends. An example is the Phillip (1804-1870) and Priscilla (1804-1876) Tippett stone, memorializing one of the founding families of Bethel. There are two sturdy columns joined by a graceful arch, perhaps symbolizing the couple's union, broken only by death when Mr. Tippett was drowned in a nearby river (Gooch, p. 7).

Unfortunately, the nature of the sandstone used in monuments causes it to weather with time. The resultant chipping, eroding, and breaking of ornaments and details is sad. Winged angels, doves, and urns were particularly susceptible to damage Laurel wreaths, buds and blossoms and lambs appear alone and in combination; crosses there are, of course, in plenty. Most of the gravestones of the earlier period are more graceful, detailed, and interesting than their severely plain, often massive counterparts, large marble stones without any surface ornament. But the plain markers of the very earliest residents

usually rectangular with the upper surface gently arched, are appealing in their very simplicity. Some picture stones appear with photographic insets like that of Lottie and Louis Cosby. These were popular with only a few families. What appears at a distance to be a stone mound of approximately three feet in height proves to be at close range a marker carefully structured to resemble a stone cairn, memorializing Alfred (1843-1905) and Annie (1862-1939) Burt. In the southeast section is what seems to be an unusual "homemade" marker; it is concrete with insets of red, green, and gold marbles and bits of costume jewelry, certainly a unique monument to William Gilmore (1877-1934). As time passed, simple granite or marble markers became increasingly popular, and today all must conform to the specifications of the cemetery rules. Striking in their enduring quality, they lack the more personal element and suggestion of individual taste of the ornate markers of an earlier day. We so often paused before a graceful column, a stone ornamented with clasped hands or flowers, or a lamb or angel on a child's tiny grave; they seemed to touch the heart with an impression of a longing for a beautiful remembrance for the departed and for those left behind.

As we read the grave inscriptions in search of pertinent historic and sociological data, we felt frustrated by the missing dates, time-obscured carving, and broken masonry which rendered many of the inscriptions illegible. Bethel Cemetery is kept in fine repair, yet inevitably time and nature have

removed inscriptions.

In older areas of the cemetery varying influences---the fashion of the day, the mid-Victorian preoccupation with death in its more sentimentalized aspects, the simple desire to personalize the last resting place of a loved one---result in a variety of scriptural references and tributes to the deceased, generally carved in a flowing, graceful script. Traditional messages with their strong scriptural overtones abound. Some more personal messages reflect the sorrow of those left to mourn: "Together Forever," "May We Meet Again", "Though Lost To Sight, To Memory Dear", all create a very real sense of the person remembered and ;missed by family and friends. Some stones are eloquent in their simplicity---two plain markers, inscribed only "Papa" and "Mama" and an imposing monument marked with the word "Loving". Military assignments and ranks, professional titles, and birthplaces also find their way into the cemetery's lore. Certainly one of the longest inscriptions we found was on the large Letcher monument, located near Bethel's entrance drive.

My Dear Husband
Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness;
He is gracious and full of compassion and righteous.
He shall not be afraid of evil tidings:
His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.
Psalm CXII 4-6

Erected by wife Louisa

On the reverse side of this sizable obelisk style marker the following appears:

Sacred to the Memory of
John Letcher
Died January 13, 1885
Aged 62 years 2 months 3 days
Yea though I walk through
The valley of the shadow I will fear no evil
For thou art with me.
Psalm XXIII

According to Dr. Gooch's book, John Letcher was a member of the 1872 Building Committee, elected secretary in 1873, and assisted in obtaining the services of a Mr. Turner of Carondelet as a contractor in 1874. A century later he rests in the cemetery he helped to plan.

Although we found no well known names beyond those of the church founders, the Eatherton family plot attracted our special notice, as Eatherton Road was named for this founding family. In the plot a seven foot column sacred to the memory of George L. Eatherton (1845-1915) is inscribed "Faithful and True", but inscriptions for his son and wife Louisa are difficult to decipher. This was also true of a second large Eatherton monument. Clearly visible are a finger pointing skyward and the words, "May We Meet AGain", but names, dates, and parts of an unusual inscription ("It was an angel that visited the green earth and took ----- away.") are all but gone. A personal verse for Sarah Eatherton is almost complete: "Our Mother is gone and we are left, the loss of her to mourn; But we hope to meet with her when Christ ---- God's throne."

Newer monuments with their simple recording of name and dates of birth and death create a sense of solemn dignity in

spite of their more impersonal nature. Yet, interestingly enough, trends may again be changing in our quest to be individual as well as immortal, and in the desire of the bereaved to provide what their loved one would have wanted. At Bethel a stone in memory of George Krueger carries the carving of a locomotive, reflecting his lifelong interest in trains, and words to a song special to him during his lifetime. As we paused at his memorial, it was easy to experience a sense of empathy and closeness as we reflected on his tastes and interests and the thought and care that remembered him so lovingly.

All to evident at Bethel, as in other cemeteries of the period, are the disproportionately large number of graves of infants and small children. It is painfully apparent that, in the recent past, only rarely did we find a family plot without one, often more, memorials to mark a child's short span of years. At Bethel these stones are often small in size themselves, decorated with lambs, flowers, or, in one especially tender remembrance, a sleeping dove and the inscription "Our Darling", William Decker 1918-1920. A German-inscribed stone marks the three years, 1859-1853, allotted to Sophia; nearby lies Maria Adele, 1870-1871. Some stones are simply inscribed "Infant"; one is marked "Baby", 1879-1880. In the Baier family plot a row of stones attests to Infant Son of J.E. and Alice I. Baier, 1909-1909; Roy George, Son of Alex A and Alice Hardt, November 5-December 26, 1911; Raymond, Son of J.E. and Alice

I. Baier, 1913-1916; and Margaret, September 13-26, 1923. The grief at losing so many young children is almost beyond imagining and, certainly, these bereaved parents must have felt their faith put to the most stringent test. Ironically, the parents, J.E. and Alice Baier, lived long lives, he dying in 1966 at the age of 80 and she in 1977 in her 90th year, more than fifty years after the death of her daughter Margaret. We hoped that other children, born, grown to maturity, and buried elsewhere, survived to bring joy to the mother and father and grandchildren for their mature years. Although we kept no exact count, it appeared that most of the infant deaths were boys. Nowhere did we find what might have been a mother-child childbirth death, which is often assumed as not uncommon for this period of time. Regardless of the nostalgia engendered by a retrospect of the "good old days", no one could be other than thankful that the loss of young children is no longer a sad but unsurprising burden of family life.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

As the day wore on, the bright blue faded from the sky and the clouds turned gray. We took a short break in the car, the heater running on high, to warm our hands and study our notes. Very little information beyond name and dates is given on grave markers. We had often paused to ponder a set of names and dates. Were August and Lena husband and wife or brother

and sister? What had happened to little Ruth, the three year old whose marker was a single lamb, inscribed "The Lord Is My Shepherd"? Had the Depression wiped out the family funds and necessitated the concrete stone for William Gilmore? Were both of John and Hazel Jaeger's sons, John Jr. (1913-1942) and Arnold (1920-1944) killed in World War II? Or was it only Arnold whose young face, photographed and set into his marker, showed us a young PFC, killed in Italy? The questions had no answers and went on and on. But one unresolved mystery for us took precedence over all the rest.

West of the drive near the northeast corner of the cemetery stands an imposing obelisk which appeared to be about eight feet high, thrusting skyward almost defiantly. At its base are what appear to be short granite segments of a tree trunk, five of them randomly cast round the base. One side of the monument is inscribed simply A.J. Link, 1857-1930; the other, Margaret, Wife of A.J. Link, died May 27, 1927, aged forty-one, Born in Galway Ireland. Nearby stands a smaller obelisk with four more of the unexplained "tree" segments lying near the foundation. Three of the four were inscribed with names: Grover, Mary, and Andrew. Above, on the column, was engraved the words: Children of A.J. and M.A. Link

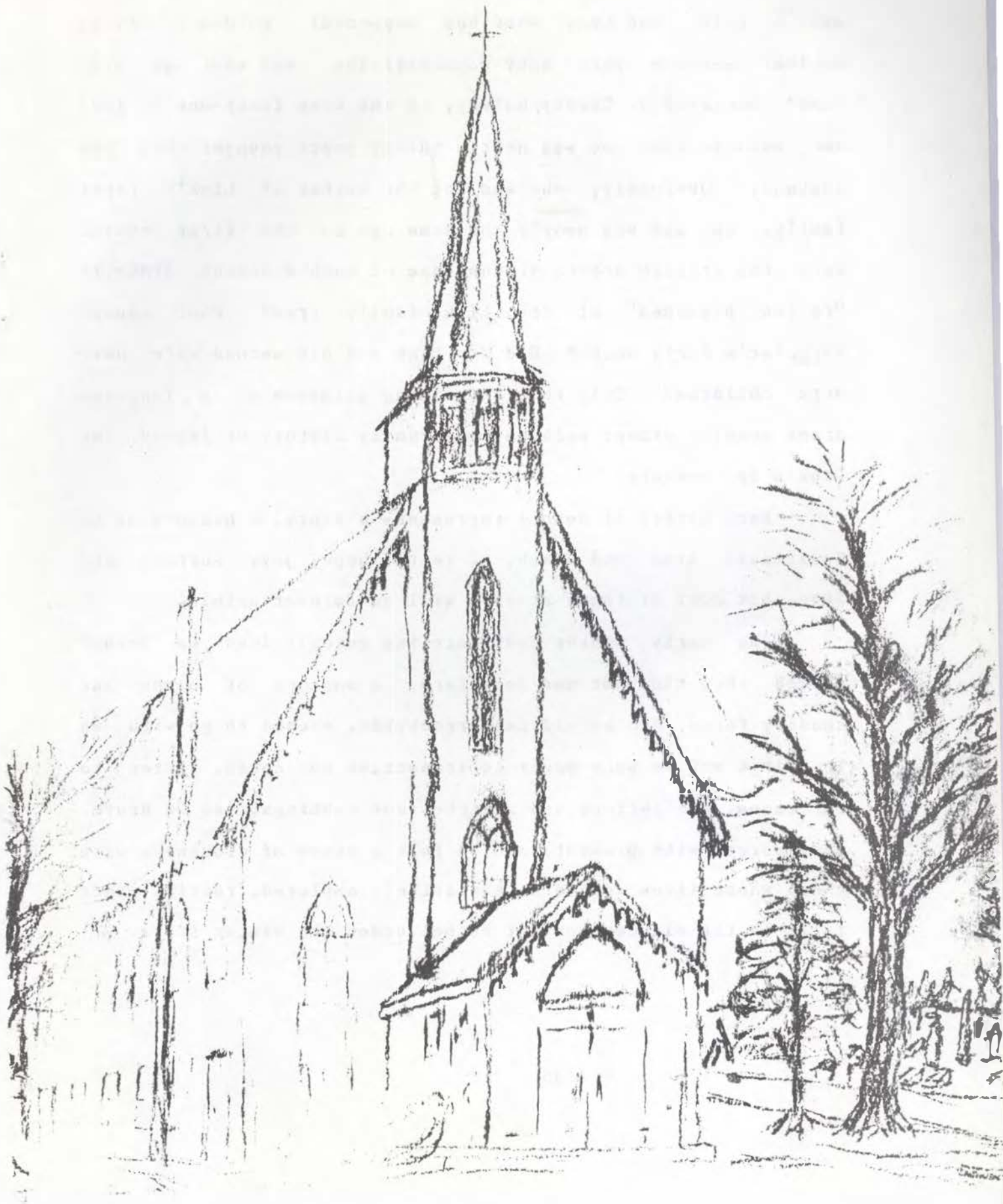
Grover, Born April 6, 1885; Died July 29, 1891
Mary, Born October 24, 1887; Died July 27, 1891
Andrew, Born May 4, 1889; Died July 31, 1891

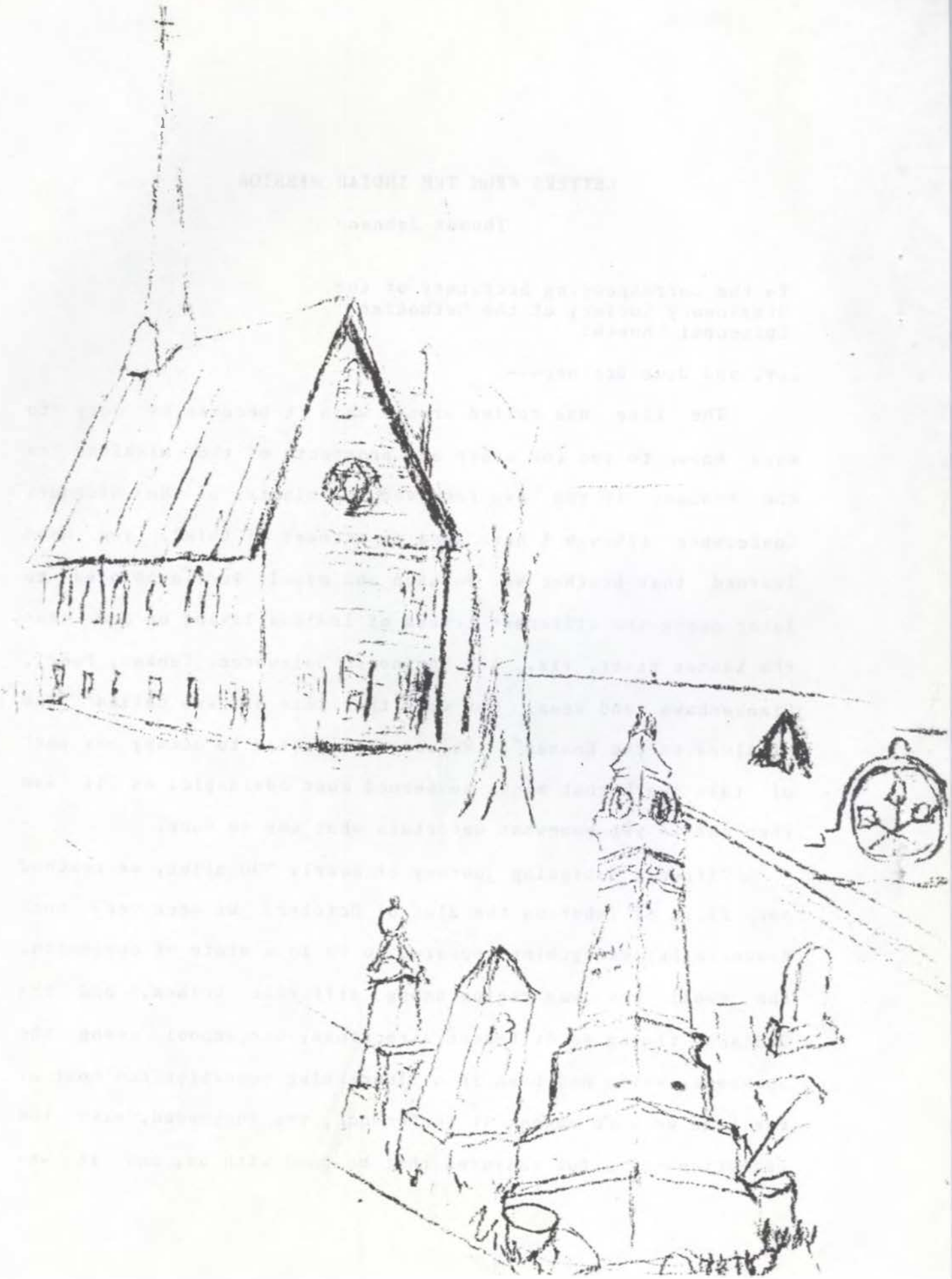
It appeared to us that A.J. Link, when a young man of thirty-

four, had lost three children within a week, ages six, three and a half, and two. What had happened? Epidemic, fire, accident---there were many possibilities. And what of M.A. Link? Margaret of County Galway, if she were forty-one in 1927 was born in 1886 and was nearly thirty years younger than her husband. Obviously, she was not the mother of Link's first family, as she was nearly the same age as the first child. Were the granite stones at the base of each monument symbolic "fallen branches" of the Link family tree? What caused Margaret's early death? Did Mr. Link and his second wife have more children? Only the tantalizing glimpses of a long-ago drama remain, except perhaps as a family history or legend for Link's descendants.

Each marker at Bethel represents a story, a history of an individual life and death, of faith, hope, joy, sorrow, and love, but most of these stories will go forever untold.

The early winter dusk settling quietly down on Bethel marked the time for our departure. A montage of names and shadowy faces, dim as old daguerreotypes, seemed to go with us in spirit and we were eager to transcribe our notes, listen to our tapes, and perfect and sketches and rubbings. As we drove, past merged with present, and we felt a sense of closeness with those whose lives we had so tentatively explored, resting peace fully in the old cemetery at Bethel under the winter stars.





## LETTERS FROM THE INDIAN MISSION

Thomas Johnson

To the Corresponding Secretary of the
Missionary Society of the Methodist
Episcopal Church:

Rev. and Dear Brother---

The time has rolled around when it becomes my duty to make known to you the state and prospects of the missions on the Kanzas. If you have received the minutes of the Missouri Conference (though I have seen no account of this), you have learned that brother Wm. Johnson and myself were appointed to labor among the different tribes of Indians living on and near the Kanzas river, viz., the Shawnees, Delawares, Kanzas, Peori, Piankeshaws and Weas. Our work thus laid off was called "The Missions on the Kanzas". We were instructed to occupy any part of this work that might be deemed most advisable, as it was then and is yet somewhat uncertain what can be done.

After a fatiguing journey of nearly 500 miles, we reached our field of labor on the 21st of October. We were very much discouraged; everything appeared to be in a state of confusion; the small pox was raging among different tribes, and the Indians flying in different directions; our school among the Shawnees, which had been in a flourishing condition the most of the time we were absent at conference, was suspended, with the exception of a few children that boarded with us, and it was

but seldom that we could even see an Indian to get instruction in learning the language; therefore there was no possible chance to preach to them, consequently our spirits had well sunk within us, for we felt that we had a full and heavy year's work assigned to us, and had no time to lose. But we had learned from a little experience that patience, perseverance and fortitude are essential qualifications for missionaries; we therefore determined to do the best we could.

Brother William has visited the Kanzas tribe, and stayed a short season with them. He procured an Indian to aid him in learning the language, and returned to the Shawnee mission, as the Kanzas were generally from home. He has aided some in keeping up the Shawnee school, (as our teacher has been absent nearly two months on business) and had advanced considerably in the language, and expects to be able to preach to them next summer.

We will set out for their villages next week, and will probably spend the principal part of the winter among them. They are about seventy miles from this place. We have been striving to get our houses prepared for winter, and collecting provisions for the year.

The small pox has subsided, and the Indians are now returning home. Our prospects seem to brighten a little. There are accessions to our Shawnee school almost every day, and the children learn very well. We have instructed in this

school upwards of thirty Indian children, though not all at the same time. There is but little doubt but we shall have at this establishment as many as we can manage advantageously, and we hope before the year closes, to have schools in operation among the different tribes in our charge.

But the instructing of children alone does not satisfy us; this, though of great importance, is only a secondary object. Our great anxiety is to find access to those who are capable of understanding the nature and enjoying the influence of our holy religion; but here our way is hedged up yet, for want of suitable interpreters; but we are endeavoring to improve every moment we can get in learning the language ourselves. Brother William is learning the Kanzas, and I am learning the Shawnee, as with the knowledge of these two languages we can converse and preach to six or eight different tribes of these Northwestern Indians.

We collected together a tolerably good congregation of Shawnees last Sabbath, and as it was Christmas day, we endeavored to explain to them the reason of our keeping this day in remembrance. They listened with great solemnity while we told them of Jesus Christ coming into the world to save all men, red men as well as white. They informed us afterwards that they would think about what we told them when they went home. I must conclude, for I have already lengthened out this communication beyond what I intended.

We hope that the friends of missions in general will not

fail to pray that the great Head of the Church may be with us in our infant efforts to enter this vast missionary field among the numerous tribes of Northwestern Indians. I remain yours, in the bonds of a peaceful Gospel.

Thos. Johnson

December 29, 1831

Rev. and Dear Brother---

Since I wrote you last I have visited the Kansas Indians. I found but few of them at home. The most of the tribe had started to hunt buffalo two days before we reached the villages. These Indians live on the Kansas river, 60 miles from its mouth, on a straight line, and have their villages on both sides of the river, but a part of the nation have removed 40 miles higher up the river, for the purpose of getting near the buffalo. I never before saw any part of the human family in so wretched a condition. They live chiefly in dirt houses. They cultivate only a small portion of ground, and this done chiefly by the women, with hoes. They do not plough. They have no fences. Their only dependence for meat is on the chase, and the deer have entirely disappeared from their prairies. They have to go 250 miles, or farther, to find the buffalo, and then are frequently driven back by their enemies; and should they succeed in finding the buffalo, if they bring

any of the meat home, it freqently has to be packed by their women, for many of them have no horses to ride; and their means of support are becoming more difficult every year, for the buffalo, like the deer, are fast retiring. Unless we can succeed in getting these people to change their habits of life, they must soon perish. We hope to be able, at the next session of our annual conference, to send missionaries among these people.

From this tribe I set out through the lonesome prairie, without any trace, for the Peori village. After a day and a half severe traveling I reached the mission at that place. That night one of the members of our society died; but she appeared to be entirely resigned to her fate, and exhorted all around never to cease in their efforts to become a Christian people. She requested them to meet at the grave, and have preaching when they buried her. This was attended to. A more solemn scene I never witnessed. The corpse was deposited in the grave, and they all seated themselves around while I explained to them the doctrine of the resurrection. They all appeared to feel thankful, while they contemplated the happiness of meeting their departed sister where death would never molest them again. When we were done talking they covered up the grave, and we returned home. This mission is doing well.

The Shawnee mission is in a prosperous condition, and is likely to accomplish much good in this nation. The school and society are both large and regular in attendance. The mechanic

shop is opened at this place, and the Indians appear to be pleased with the idea of their boys becoming mechanics. A considerable number of them are engaged as regular apprentices.

The Delaware mission is still gaining ground, and the members of the society appear to enjoy much of the influence of religion, though they are greatly persecuted by the pagan part of the nation.

The mission at this place (Kickapoo) has had some difficulties to encounter this year, but they are fast giving way, and I think our prospects of ultimate success are as good as they ever have been. Our school is small at this time, but there will be no difficulty in enlarging as much as we choose, when our buildings, which are now in a state of preparation, shall have been completed.

I shall not be able to visit any of the tribes west of us before conference; but I have engaged several of the officers of the dragoons, who are now on a tour to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, to collect all the information in their power relative to the condition of the different tribes they may visit. I have no doubt this will be attended to prompty, for some are men of piety, who feel a deep interest in the spread of the Gospel among all people. But I have written enough for one letter and shall conclude.

I remain yours in love,
Thos. Johnson

June 16, 1835

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